

HAIGLER PLANTATION COMMISSARY
(Loftin Grocery)
Highway 37
Burkville vicinity
Lowndes County
Alabama

HABS No. A1-884-B

HABS

ALA

43-BURK.V.

3c -

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Southeast Region
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HABS
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43-BURKE, V.
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAIGLER COMMISSARY HABS NO. AL-884-B
(Loftin Grocery)

Location: The Haigler Commissary is located on the west side of County Highway 37, 1.6 km north of U.S. Highway 80 in Lowndes County, Alabama

Present Owner: General Electric - Montgomery Project
Lowndes County Road 40, Route 1, Box 9-D
Burkville, Alabama 36725

Present Occupant: Vacant

Most Recent Use: Grocery store

Significance: The Haigler Commissary is significant for its association with the plantation complex and its role in the agricultural and commercial history of Lowndes County and the Black Belt region.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: ca. 1860
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: See HABS Form for the Old Haigler Plantation House
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown
5. Original Plans and construction: None located
6. Alterations and additions: To the original single room structure was added an addition to the west (rear) end.

- B. Historical Context: The commissary is one of the few remaining examples of a Reconstruction-era commissary established on an antebellum plantation property as a manifestation of the economic self-sufficiency of a large scale productive unit.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The original single room gable roofed commissary survives complete with interior counters and shelving
2. Condition of fabric: The structure is currently in poor to dilapidated condition. The building's structure has deteriorated, resulting in floor sags. The front porch is near collapse. The roof is sagging and is in poor condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The one story commissary is a rectangular structure 22'-3" wide by 30'-6" deep. It has a nearly square rear (west) addition 11'-2" by 12'-4".
2. Foundations: The structure sits on wood piers 12 to 18" in diameter along the south and east sides, and consists of 8" x 10" wood sill beams resting directly on the ground along the north and west sides.
3. Walls: Walls of the original section are 6" thick and are sheathed in board and batten siding. Battens are 3" wide and boards vary from 11" to 1'-0-1/2" on center. The west addition has 2" x 4" cornerboards and clapboard siding, exposure varying from 7-1/2" to 8-1/4".
4. Structural system, framing: The original section is wood frame construction, the walls built of 4"x4" studs set 4' on center. Floor joists are 2'-8" on center but could not be measured for size. Ceiling joists could not be measured. The walls of the west addition are constructed of 2"x4" studs, 3'-0" on center. Floor and ceiling joists could not be measured
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The entrance porch is full width across the east facade and is 4'-1" deep. It is supported by 4"x5" joists and has random width plank flooring. No roof exists over the porch.
6. Chimneys: None

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The front (east) double doors are constructed of flush diagonal planking, are 1'-10-1/2" x 7'-0", and are 2" thick. Double screen doors matching in size and with two panels constructed of a 1"x4" frame are mounted on the outside. The north wall has a single door 2'-8" x 6'-4" constructed of vertical planks. This door is not operable from inside.

The north door of the west addition is 3'-0" x 6'-2" and constructed of vertical planks varying from 9" to 10". This door is 1-1/2" thick. The south door of this addition is identical but is inoperable.

- b. Windows and shutters: Windows in the original structure consist of two 9-over-9 light double-hung sash windows on the south wall and one later window without sash on the west wall. The double hung windows have 2'-5" x 4'-8" openings, while the later window is 3'-5" x 3'-5". There is no frame trim on the windows.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is a simple gable sheathed with corrugated galvanized sheet metal. The rear addition has a simple shed roof of galvanized "5-V" sheet metal supported by 2"x4" rafters.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The original structure has boxed eaves along the north and south and a simple 5" fascia board on the east and west gables. A 1"x4" fascia board is used to finish the rafter ends of the rear shed roof.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The original commissary is a single rectangular room entered from the west end. It has fixed shelves along the north and south walls that are supported by vertical standards. Counters also run down the north and south walls. The three original counters have panelled fronts with irregular width beaded boards, are 2'-10" deep, vary in length

and have shelves within them. Two later plank construction counters vary in length.

- b. Second floor: None.
- 2. Stairways: None.
- 3. Flooring: Tongue-and-groove wood floors 4-4-1/2" wide are found in the original section while plank floors of random width boards are found in the addition.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls of the original section have a vertical beaded board finish, 4" wide, on the north, east, and south walls, and a vertical plank finish of 4" and 12" boards on the west wall. The ceiling consists of 4" beaded boards running east-west.

Corrugated sheet metal has been used over the stud walls of the addition and the ceiling is unfinished.

- 5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: A door in the west wall connects the original structure with the west addition. It is constructed of 3/4" thick vertical planks 4" wide and is 2'-1" x 6'-4" in size.
 - b. Windows: Two windows in the south wall are 2'-5" x 4'-8" with 9-over-9 light double-hung sash. An additional opening in the west wall 3'-5" x 3'-5" has no sash and has been covered over.
- 6. Decorative features and trim: The original counters have vertical beaded board panels.
- 7. Hardware: No significant hardware exists.
- 8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: None.
 - b. Lighting: Electric lines to building.
 - c. Plumbing: None.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The Commissary faces east and is set back from the county highway approximately 20 meters. This area was used for

parking. The structure sits on a site sloping downward towards the south and is surrounded by mature trees. Numerous vines had been allowed to grow over the structure.

2. Historic landscape design: No significant landscape components were noted.
3. Outbuildings: Immediately to the north is the New Haigler House.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

See HABS Form for the Old Haigler House.

Prepared by: Michael Emrick, Historical Architect, and Philip Thomason, Architectural Historian
The Ehrenkrantz Group /Building
Conservation Technology, Inc.
August - September 1983

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project was conducted by The Ehrenkrantz Group/Building Conservation Technology, Inc., of Nashville, Tennessee under contract from Environmental Research and Technology, Inc. for General Electric - Montgomery Project, Burkville, Alabama.

Project personnel included Michael Emrick, Project Architect (project coordination, architectural data); James Thompson, Architect (measured drawings and sketch plans); Philip Thomason, project historian; and Barry Starkey, photographer. Agency involvement included the Mobile District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service.

